

and I have no other object of earthly ambition than to leave my country in a peaceful and prosperous condition, and to live in the affection and respect of my countrymen. The dark and ominous clouds which now appear to be impending over the Union, I conscientiously believe may be dissipated with honor to every portion of it, by the admission of Kansas during the present session of Congress, whereas if she should be rejected, I greatly fear these clouds will become darker and more ominous than any which have ever yet threatened the constitution and the Union.

JAMES BUCHANAN.
WASHINGTON, Feb. 2d, 1858.

The Immunity of the Coal Trade.

We have read, with interest, the memorial of the coal and iron companies—owners and operators of the semi-bituminous coal lands in the counties of Hampshire and Hardy in Virginia, and Alleghany county, in Maryland—for aid from the State in the completion of the Alexandria, Loudoun and Hampshire railroad. Referring to the valuable mineral resources of these counties, they say that "during the past year, notwithstanding the great depression in the market, they have mined and delivered from these counties, to the Baltimore and Ohio railroad, and the Chesapeake and Ohio canal, about 600,000 tons of coal. That the superior and valuable character of this coal, for steam and manufacturing purposes, continues constantly to attract consumers, and that its recent introduction, in this country, into locomotives at a saving over wood of 70 per cent., promises to increase a demand which already exceeds the means of transportation; that the Baltimore and Ohio railroad Company declare that they have now as much of this freight as their other trade will permit them to handle, with the motive power at their command; and that the revenue yielded by it will not only make the road self-sustaining, but will during its last fiscal year, was \$150,000. That your petitioners have a large amount of capital invested, and are prepared to furnish any quantity of coal as soon as they have adequate means of transportation. That the Alexandria, Loudoun and Hampshire railroad has been commenced and is in process of construction to the Cumberland coal field at Piedmont, and when completed, by enabling your petitioners to transport coal to Alexandria at a much less cost than to any other shipping port, will at once make the Alexandria a great coal depot, and enable only to Philadelphia, and as experience proves, that the centres for coal and iron mines become great manufacturing centres, Alexandria will in consequence become a large manufacturing city."

The memorial above referred to, together with the interesting and valuable tabular statement submitted, showing the amount of coal (four hundred and twenty-six thousand, eight hundred and thirty tons) transported from the Cumberland coal region during the past year, and the amount of coal (two hundred and thirty-five thousand tons) which was transported from the Alexandria, Loudoun and Hampshire railroad, and the fact that the terminus of the road is only thirty-five miles nearer tide-water than Baltimore.

It should be borne in mind, however, that the consumption of this semi-bituminous, as well as all other varieties of coal, is continually on the increase and is only limited by the price at which it can be afforded to the consumer. The thousand per cent increase in the demand for mineral fuel, for steamships, furnaces, and iron works, is enough, to startle the timid mind and lead it to conceive that if we go on at this destructive rate of burning up the bowels of our mother earth, the day is near at hand when she will in reality be destroyed by fire.

For instance, according to the tabular statement in the issue 1846, this Cumberland coal trade may be said to have commenced. That year there were brought to tide-water only 18,393 tons and during the past year the quantity had increased to 429,803 tons. Again, the tabular statement of coal statistics, before us, shows that during the year 1850, when the anthracite coal trade commenced, there were mined and brought to market only 1,265 tons and during the past year 6,764,587 (nearly seven million) tons of that coal were transported from the Pennsylvania mines to the seaboard, to supply the wants of our Atlantic cities.

These data furnish ample material for sober reflection on the subject of the final combustion of our little planet, and should not be overlooked by those who believe in the ultimate destruction of all things. To our legislators these statistics present food for serious meditation on the question of a steady continuance and completion of our main railroad.—*Richmond Enquirer.*

COMMUNICATED.

I can very well appreciate the importance of the Alexandria Canal, but I hope it does not need to destroy other interests in order to sustain itself.

The Potomac Bridge is older even than the Canal, and in so far as claim precedence. The wholesale statements that have been made about the worthlessness of the bridge to Alexandria, are certainly based on a want of correct information.

To our Hotels alone, I learn the bridge is worth several thousand dollars per annum, to the Livery Stable and Omnibus interest it is certainly worth several thousand more; then again Carriage Makers, Blacksmiths, and other mechanics, are largely interested. By means of the bridge too, our merchants and other citizens on their return from the North, can arrive home the same evening, in place of remaining in Washington or Baltimore all night, which, by the way, is not only a saving of time and money, but a great satisfaction to such as have no one to leave in charge of their families during their absence.

When the river is frozen, the value of the bridge becomes incalculable, thousands of persons then finding in their sole means of reaching Alexandria, to say nothing of goods for our merchants, or freight for our railroads, indeed it has not been very long, I believe, since we were saved by the bridge from a famine in sugar, and possibly in other articles of family consumption.

Besides all this, we do not ask for any loan or untied thing, or for any expenditure of money either by the town or its citizens; we merely desire an expression of public sentiment, through which we hope Congress may be brought to do justice to the interests involved, by the repair or renewal of the present trail structure.

ALMANAC.

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